

May 20, 2015

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room 343
Salem, OR 97301



Re: Animal Legal Defense Fund's Support of SB 913

Dear Chair Barker and Committee Members:

My name is Lora Dunn, and I am Staff Attorney for the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), a national non-profit organization of attorneys working to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. With an office in Portland, ALDF enjoys a nationwide membership of over 200,000 contributing supporters, many of whom also reside in Oregon. It is on their behalf that I am writing in support of SB 913, which would ban the possession and trade in ivory and rhinoceros horns.

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Illegal poaching is estimated to account for sixty-five percent of the deaths of African elephants, a critically threatened species whose population has been decimated by over seventy-five percent in the past few decades due to wildlife trafficking and a growing demand for ivory. It is estimated that an average of ninety-six elephants are killed every day for ivory and that African elephants could become extinct in the next ten years. The U.S. is second only to China in the sale of ivory products. In recognition of the fact that domestic trade in ivory serves as a loophole for the illegal trade, the Obama administration issued an executive order in July 2013, declaring wildlife trafficking to be an "international crisis" and directing federal agencies to undertake rulemaking to eliminate import and export of ivory for commercial purposes.

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Last October, more than 130 cities worldwide—including Bend and Parkdale—participated in the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos. Just last year, New York State and New Jersey banned the sale of ivory. And this year, ivory bans have been introduced in several states in addition to Oregon, including California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Washington, Iowa, Oklahoma, Virginia, Massachusetts, Illinois, Arkansas, and Florida.

We urge you to vote in favor of SB 913 as passed by the Senate, and without any additional amendments, to help ensure that Oregon becomes part of the growing list of states that are taking proactive measures to help halt the rapid decline of elephants, rhinoceros, and other threatened species being slaughtered at an alarming rate for their parts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lora Dunn".

Lora Dunn
Staff Attorney
Animal Legal Defense Fund